

Dec., 1947



Standing, left to right: Dr. Oswald T. Avery, Dr. Lowell J. Reed, Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., Dr. Homer Smith, Dr. Thomas Parran, Sir Wilson Jameson, Dr. George Bachr, and Dr. Reginald M. Atwater. Seated: Mrs. Albert D. Lasker and Dr. Alice Hamilton.

#### THE LASKER AWARDS FOR 1947

THE Lasker Awards of the American Public Health Association are presented annually by the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation to men and women in the field of medical research and public health administration whose efforts have contributed to, or will in time result in, the vastly improved health status of the peoples of the earth. In addition, outstanding work or research done by large groups where it is impossible to single out any one individual, is honored.

The awards are given not only to honor the recipients and dramatize their accomplishments but also to arouse increased professional and public interest in medical research and public health administration and to aid in the rapid

dissemination of new medical information.

The Lasker Awards for 1947 were conferred on October 9, 1947, at the Second General Session of the 75th Annual Meeting in Atlantic City, N. J. Five individuals and two groups were honored. The beautifully illuminated citations read as follows:

To Oswald T. Avery, M.D., for studies on the antigenic constitution of bacteria.

With unusual persistence, remarkable insight and extraordinary accuracy of observation, Oswald T. Avery has devoted the greater part of his scientific career to the study of the pneumococcus.

Animated by an unsurpassed intellectual curiosity and a desire to conquer one of the most deadly enemies of man, he undertook to elucidate in logical sequence the biological

activities, the immunological characteristics, and the pathogenic properties of the pneumococcus. In this he so far succeeded that today it is fair to say that more is known about this organism than about any other human parasite.

Were this all it would be a unique accomplishment, but quite early in the course of his investigations he became interested in searching for a chemical explanation for the type-specificity of pneumococci. As a consequence, he discovered and identified the capsular polysaccharides and demonstrated their role in determining this specificity.

He furthermore succeeded in throwing light on the immunological relationships of the intracellular constituents of this organism.

Through these discoveries he laid the foundation for his brilliant analysis in chemical terms of the antigenic constitution of the whole pneumococcus. He thus established a perfect pattern for the antigenic analysis of other microorganisms both by himself and by others who have followed in his footsteps.

Among Dr. Avery's many brilliant contributions to scientific knowledge none has been more outstanding than his studies on the antigenic constitution of bacteria. Through them he is one of the founders of the science of immunochemistry. Because of them our comprehension of the complex problems of infectious disease has been immeasurably enriched.